

REMARKS

In light of the above-amendatory matter and remarks to follows, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

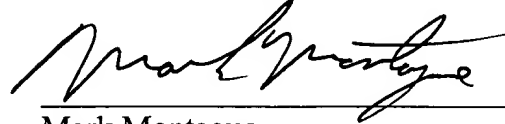
Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stoutenburg et al. (Stoutenburg) (US Patent 6,488,203) in view of Ladd et al. (Ladd) (US Patent 6,470,317).

For the following reasons, the Stoutenburg patent is not valid prior art to the present application. The Stoutenburg patent issued on December 3, 2002, based upon a filing date of October 26, 1999. The present application was filed on August 9, 2000, and claims priority to provisional patent application serial number 60/174,646, which was filed on January 5, 2000 (It is noted that the provisional application does not need to be relied upon for this discussion). Thus, Stoutenburg is not prior art under either 35 U.S.C. 102(a) or 102(b). Moreover, the present application was invented by the applicant before the October 26, 1999 application filing date of the Stoutenburg Patent, as evidenced by the attached declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 with attached documentary evidence. Thus, Stoutenburg is not prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Hence, Stoutenburg is not valid prior art to the present application. It is therefore requested that the rejection of claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

New claims 18-23 are presented. The allowance of claims 18-23 is solicited.

In light of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Montague", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Montague
Reg. No. 36,612

COWAN, LIEBOWITZ & LATMAN, P.C.
1133 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036-6799
(212) 790-9200